

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC 20554**

In the Matter of
High-Cost Universal Service Support
Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service

WC Docket No. 05-337

In the Matter of Universal Service Contribution
Methodology Federal-State Joint Board
on Universal Service

WC Docket No. 06-122

The Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service

CC Docket No. 96-45

COMMENTS OF YOURTEL AMERICA, INC.

YourTel America, Inc. ("YourTel" or "Company"), respectfully submits these Comments in response to the September 28th, 2009 request of the Federal Communications Commission ("Commission" or "FCC") for comments on the request for Universal Service Fund Policy guidance from the Universal Service Administration Company ("USAC").¹ Specifically, YourTel provides these comments addressing USAC's attempt to gain "...clarification as to whether eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs) are required to separately list the supported services enumerated in 47 C.F.R. § 54.101 when advertising the availability of such services and the associated charge for each service."²

¹ DA 09-2117, Sept. 28, 2009, *Comment Sought On Request For Universal Service Fund Policy Guidance Requested by the Universal Service Administrative Company*.

² Letter from Richard A. Belden, Chief Operating Officer, USAC, to Julie Veach, Acting Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, WC Docket No. 05-337 (filed Aug. 19, 2009) (USAC Aug. 19, 2009 Letter); Letter from Richard A. Belden, Chief Operating Officer, USAC, to Julie Veach, Acting Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, WC Docket Nos. 05-337; 06-122 (filed Aug. 21, 2009) (USAC Aug. 21, 2009 Letter).

While YourTel understands the request for guidance was submitted in relation to policy regarding the high-cost support portion of Universal Service and YourTel is a designated Low-Income Eligible Telecommunications Carrier ("ETC") YourTel believes strongly this is a perfect opportunity for the FCC and USAC to make a decision on the side of those consumers eligible for Universal Service by keeping this requirement simple.

I. INTRODUCTION

YourTel is a small, privately owed telecommunications carrier headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri that provides local and long distance services to low income customers in Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma. YourTel has been designated as an ETC by the public utility commissions in Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma and has been an active participant in the USF low income Lifeline and Link-Up program since 2003. The vast majority of YourTel's customers are Lifeline eligible and 95% of them did not have telephone service prior to purchasing YourTel's services. During this time, YourTel has had extensive experience in advertising the availability of Universal Service.

II. ADVERTISED LISTS OF SERVICES ARE CONFUSING

As written, the list of services in question is:

1. Voice grade access to the public switched network;
2. Local usage;
3. Dual-tone multi-frequency signaling or its functional equivalent;

4. Single party service or its functional equivalent;
5. Access to emergency services;
6. Access to operator services;
7. Access to interexchange services;
8. Access to directory assistance; and
9. Toll limitation for qualifying low-income consumers.³

Clearly, this is a list written in the language of telecom professionals and not for the telecom consumer. Regardless, even if this list were to be translated into terms more understandable, a list of nine different items that comprise the single term of "local phone service" only serves to confuse customers and stimulate disinterest. It has been the experience of YourTel that customers, when presented with advertising for local service, are already under the assumption that the services detailed in the previous list are included. The goal of the Universal Service Program, at all levels, is to ensure consumers are able to purchase and receive basic telephone services, not to make it more difficult for them to understand a program from which they could benefit.

III. DICTATED ADVERTISING IS UNECESSARY

Many ETCs do not advertise and provide services out of statutory obligations, but instead do so as an integral part of their business plans. As a result, required advertising can become an obstacle to those that are providing a clear message. For example, while the recent requirement that ETCs provide DTV transition information to Lifeline/Linkup customers was with merit as it

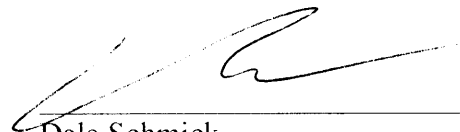
³ 47 C.F.R. § 54.101.

reinforced the valuable partnership that carriers such as YourTel have with the Commission and USAC in providing an information bridge to the public, implementing the actual language was burdensome and short-circuited YourTel's planned Lifeline awareness campaigns.⁴ YourTel takes this opportunity to suggest to the Commission that, in situations such as these, an avenue be made available to ETCs that would allow them to seek an authoritative approval for relief or, at the very least, to be able to propose a creative alternative to any specific language crafted.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, YourTel respectfully requests that USAC only need to ensure that the agency approving the ETC has vetted the required services, not that the list is being included in advertising.

Respectfully submitted,



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⁴ See *DTV Consumer Education Initiative*, MB Docket No. 07-148, Report and Order, FCC 08-56 (rel. March 3, 2008).